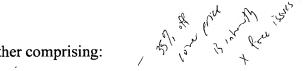What is claimed is:

1.   1.   A method for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:

2.   receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;

3.   determining if there is a subscription price stored for the periodical; and

4.   outputting an offer for a subscription to the periodical if there is a subscription price

5.   stored for the periodical.

1.   2.   The method of claim 1 in which the step of receiving an identifier comprises:

2.   optically scanning a bar code that indicates the periodical.

1.   3.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2.   receiving a response to the offer, the response indicating one of an issue of the periodical

3.   and the subscription.

1.   4.   The method of claim 3, further comprising:

2.   receiving subscription information;

3.   transmitting the subscription information to a fulfillment house for fulfilling the

4.   subscription.

1.   5.   The method of claim 3 in which the step of receiving subscription information comprises:

2.   receiving subscription information from the customer.

1   6.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   adding the subscription price to a purchase price.

1   7.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   receiving a customer identifier.

1   8.   The method of claim 7, further comprising:

2   determining subscription information that corresponds to the customer identifier.

1   9.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   determining whether the customer has previously been offered a subscription to the

3 periodical.

1   10.   The method of claim 9 in which the step of outputting an offer is performed only if the

2 customer has not previously been offered a subscription to the periodical.

1   11.   The method of claim 9 in which the step of determining whether the customer has

2   previously been offered a subscription to the periodical comprises:

3   determining whether the customer has previously purchased the periodical.

1   12.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   determining whether the customer already has a subscription to the periodical.

1   13.   The method of claim 12 in which the step of outputting an offer is performed only if the

2   customer does not already have a subscription to the periodical.

1   14.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   determining a number of times that the customer has purchased an issue of the periodical.

1   15.   The method of claim 14 in which the step of outputting an offer is performed only if

2   number of times that the customer has purchased an issue of the periodical exceeds a

3   predetermined threshold.

1   16.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   storing an indication that the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical.

1   17.   The method of claim 16 in which the indication that the customer is entitled to a free

2   issue of the periodical indicates the periodical and a number of free issues of the periodical.

1   18.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   receiving a cancel signal; and

3   storing an indication that the customer is not entitled to a free issue of the periodical.

1   19.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   initiating a subscription to the periodical.

1   20.   A method for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:

2   optically scanning a bar code that indicates a periodical;

3   determining an issue price of the periodical;

4   determining if the POS terminal can initiate a subscription for the periodical;

5   outputting an offer for one of an issue of the periodical and a subscription to the

6 periodical, the offer including the issue price and the subscription price;

7   receiving a response to the offer, the response indicating one of the issue and the

8 subscription; and

9   adding the subscription price to a purchase price if the response indicates the

10 subscription.

1   21.   The method of claim 20 in which the step of determining if the POS terminal can initiate

2 a subscription for the periodical comprises:

3   determining if there is a subscription price stored for the periodical.

1   22.   A method for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:

2   receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer;

3   receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;

4   determining whether the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical; and

5   providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the customer is entitled to a free

6 issue of the periodical.

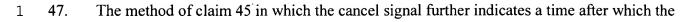1   23.   The method of claim 22, further comprising:

2   receiving a response to an offer for a subscription to the periodical, the response

3   indicating the subscription.

1   24.   The method of claim 23, further comprising:

2   storing an indication that the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical if the

3   response to the offer indicates the subscription.

1   25.   The method of claim 22 in which the step of receiving an identifier that indicates a

2   periodical comprises:

3   optically scanning a bar code that indicates the periodical.

1   26.   The method of claim 22, further comprising:

2   storing an indication that the issue of the periodical was provided without charge.

1   27.   The method of claim 22, further comprising:

2   transmitting an indication that the issue of the periodical was provided without charge.

1   28.   The method of claim 27, further comprising:

2   transmitting the indication to a fulfillment house.

1   29.   The method of claim 22 in which the step of determining whether the customer is entitled

2   to a free issue of the periodical comprises:

3   determining whether there is a free issue entry associated with the customer.

1   30.   The method of claim 29 in which the free issue entry indicates the periodical and a

2   number of free issues of the periodical.

1   31.   The method of claim 30, further comprising:

2   decreasing the number of free issues of the periodical if the issue of the periodical was

3   provided without charge.

1   32.   The method of claim 22, further comprising:

2   receiving a cancel signal; and

3   storing an indication that the customer is not entitled to a free issue of the periodical.

1   33.   The method of claim 32 in which the step of storing an indication that the customer is not

2   entitled to a free issue of the periodical comprises:

3   canceling a free issue entry associated with the customer and the periodical.

1   34.   The method of claim 32 in which the cancel signal indicates a periodical and a customer.

1   35.   The method of claim 22 in which the step of providing an issue is performed once during

2   a predetermined time period.

1   36.   The method of claim 22, further comprising:

2   storing an indication of the date on which the issue was provided.

1　37.　A method for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:

2　　　receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer;

3　　　optically scanning a bar code that indicates a periodical;

4　　　determining whether the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical;

5　　　providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the customer is entitled to a free

6　issue of the periodical;

7　　　storing an indication that the issue of the periodical was provided without charge;

8　　　receiving a cancel signal; and

9　　　storing an indication that the customer is not entitled to a free issue of the periodical.

1　38.　A method for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:

2　　　receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;

3　　　determining an amount of points necessary to purchase the periodical;

4　　　determining an amount of points of a customer; and

5　　　providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the amount of points exceeds

6　amount of points necessary to purchase the periodical.

1　39.　The method of claim 38, further comprising:

2　　　outputting an offer for a subscription to the periodical if the amount of points exceeds

3　amount of points necessary to purchase the periodical.

1　40.　The method of claim 39, further comprising:

2　　　receiving a response to the offer.

1 41. The method of claim 40, further comprising:

2   receiving subscription information if the response indicates acceptance of the offer.

1 42. The method of claim 40, further comprising:

2   decreasing the amount of points if the response indicates acceptance of the offer.

1 43. The method of claim 38, further comprising:

2   receiving a customer identifier that identifies the customer.

1 44. A method for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:

2   receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer having a subscription to a

3 periodical;

4   receiving an indication of a number of issues of the periodical provided without charge to

5 the customer; and

6   adjusting a number of issues remaining in the subscription based on the number of issues

7 of the periodical provided without charge to the customer.

1 45. The method of claim 44, further comprising:

2   transmitting a cancel signal, the cancel signal indicating a customer and a periodical.

1 46. The method of claim 45 in which the cancel signal indicates when an issue of a

2 subscription to a periodical is mailed.

1   47.   The method of claim 45 in which the cancel signal further indicates a time after which the

2   customer is not entitled to a free issue of the periodical.

1   48.   A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a

2   method performed by a computer for establishing a subscription to a periodical, the method

3   comprising:

4   receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;

5   determining if there is a subscription price stored for the periodical; and

6   outputting an offer for a subscription to the periodical if there is a subscription price

7   stored for the periodical.

1   49.   An apparatus for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:

2   means for receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;

3   means for determining if there is a subscription price stored for the periodical; and

4   means for outputting an offer for a subscription to the periodical if there is a subscription

5   price stored for the periodical.

1   50.   A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a

2   method performed by a computer for establishing a subscription to a periodical, the method

3   comprising:

4   optically scanning a bar code that indicates a periodical;

5   determining an issue price of the periodical;

6   determining if the POS terminal can initiate a subscription for the periodical;

7   outputting an offer for one of an issue of the periodical and a subscription to the

8   periodical, the offer including the issue price and the subscription price;

9   receiving a response to the offer, the response indicating one of the issue and the

10   subscription; and

11   adding the subscription price to a purchase price if the response indicates the

12   subscription.

1   51.   An apparatus for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:

2   means for optically scanning a bar code that indicates a periodical;

3   means for determining an issue price of the periodical;

4   means for determining if the POS terminal can initiate a subscription for the periodical;

5   means for outputting an offer for one of an issue of the periodical and a subscription to

6   the periodical, the offer including the issue price and the subscription price;

7   means for receiving a response to the offer, the response indicating one of the issue and

8   the subscription; and

9   means for adding the subscription price to a purchase price if the response indicates the

10   subscription.

1   52.   A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a

2   method performed by a computer for establishing a subscription to a periodical, the method

3   comprising:

4   receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer;

5   receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;

6 determining whether the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical; and

7 providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the customer is entitled to a free

8 issue of the periodical.

1 53. An apparatus for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:

2 means for receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer;

3 means for receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;

4 means for determining whether the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical;

5 and

6 means for providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the customer is entitled

7 to a free issue of the periodical.

1 54. A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a

2 method performed by a computer for establishing a subscription to a periodical, the method

3 comprising:

4 receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer;

5 optically scanning a bar code that indicates a periodical;

6 determining whether the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical;

7 providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the customer is entitled to a free

8 issue of the periodical;

9 storing an indication that the issue of the periodical was provided without charge;

10 receiving a cancel signal; and

11 storing an indication that the customer is not entitled to a free issue of the periodical.

1   55.   A method for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:

2   receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer;

3   optically scanning a bar code that indicates a periodical;

4   determining whether the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical;

5   providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the customer is entitled to a free

6   issue of the periodical;

7   storing an indication that the issue of the periodical was provided without charge;

8   receiving a cancel signal; and

9   storing an indication that the customer is not entitled to a free issue of the periodical.

1   56.   A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a

2   method performed by a computer for establishing a subscription to a periodical, the method

3   comprising:

4   receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;

5   determining an amount of points necessary to purchase the periodical;

6   determining an amount of points of a customer; and

7   providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the amount of points exceeds

8   amount of points necessary to purchase the periodical.

1   57.   An apparatus for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:

2   means for receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;

3   means for determining an amount of points necessary to purchase the periodical;

4   means for determining an amount of points of a customer; and

5   means for providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the amount of points

6   exceeds amount of points necessary to purchase the periodical.

1   58.   A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a

2   method performed by a computer for establishing a subscription to a periodical, the method

3   comprising:

4   receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer having a subscription to a

5   periodical;

6   receiving an indication of a number of issues of the periodical provided without charge to

7   the customer; and

8   adjusting a number of issues remaining in the subscription based on the number of issues

9   of the periodical provided without charge to the customer.

1   59.   An apparatus for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:

2   means for receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer having a subscription

3   to a periodical;

4   means for receiving an indication of a number of issues of the periodical provided

5   without charge to the customer; and

6   means for adjusting a number of issues remaining in the subscription based on the

7   number of issues of the periodical provided without charge to the customer.